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VOLUME 23
NOVEMBER
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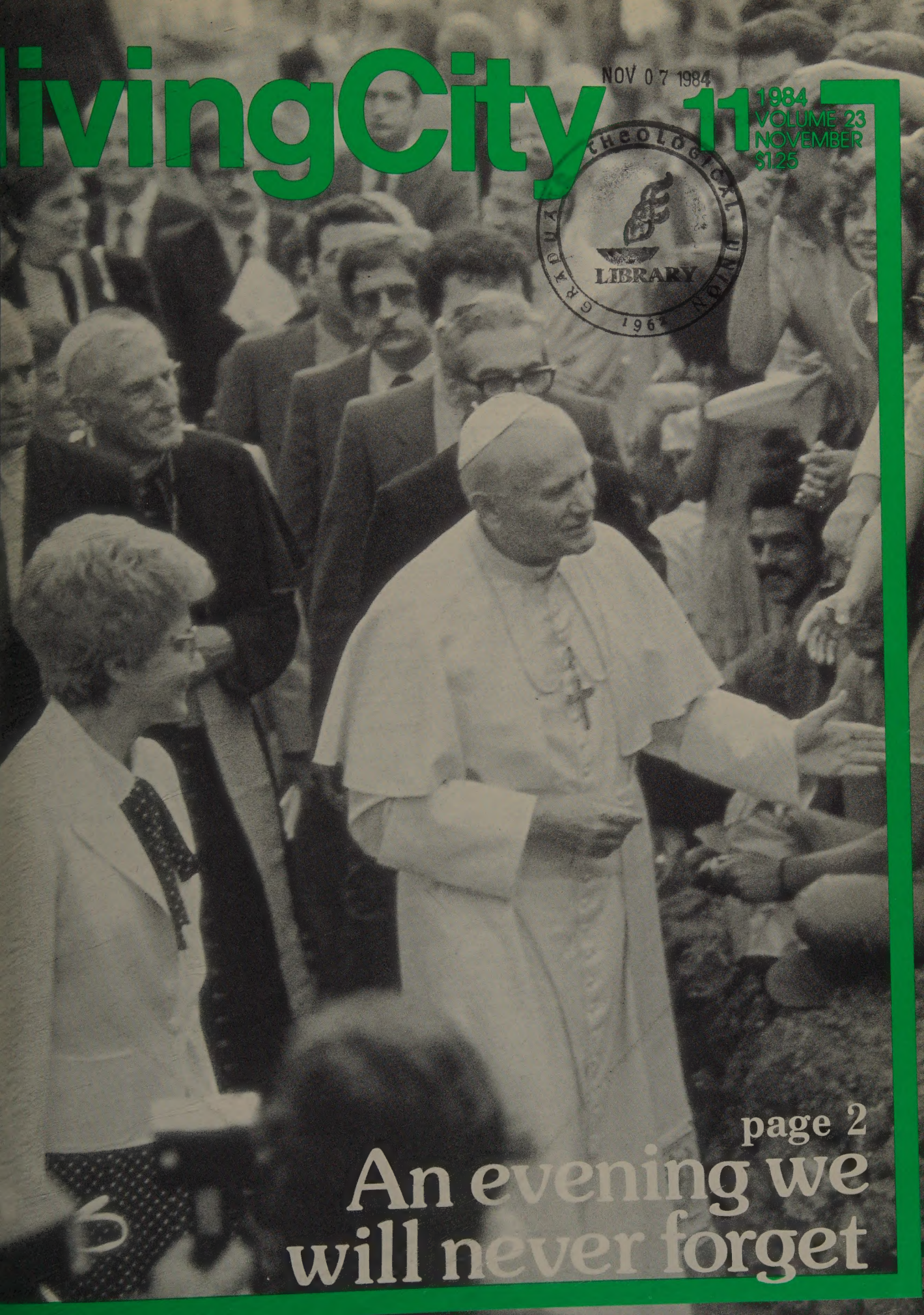

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An evening we will never forget

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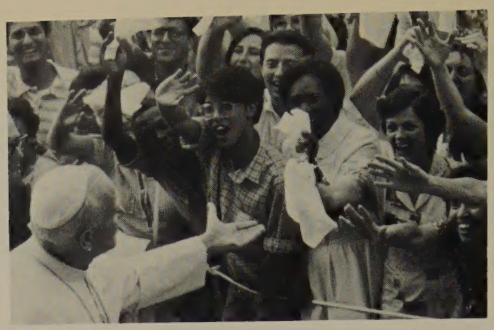

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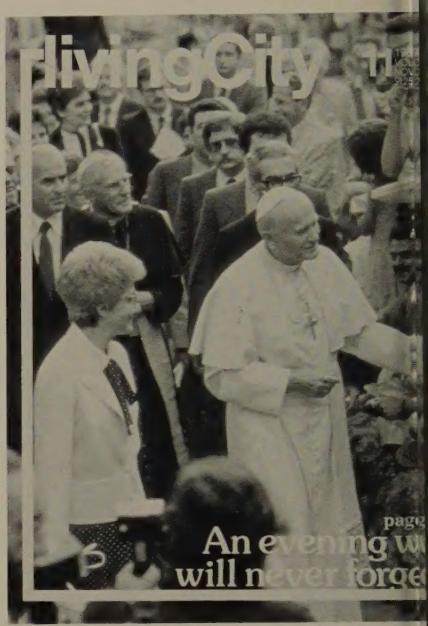

Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement, a non-profit corporation, P. O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.

Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US$12.75; Canada: US$15.00; Elsewhere: US$18.00; Air Mail (all countries): US$25.00.

An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscription orders and inquiries: LIVING CITY, P. O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.

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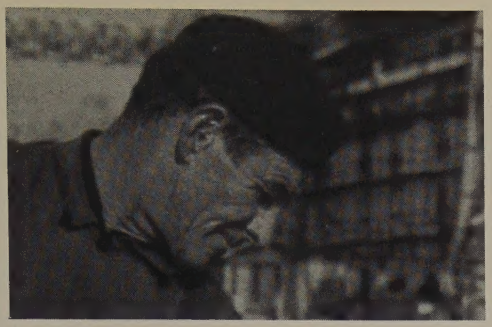
OTHER EDITIONS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

ITALIAN: "Citta Nuova" - Via degli Scipio
00192 Rome - Italy

FRENCH:
1. "Nouvelle Cite" - 131, rue Castagnary F7
Paris - France
2. "Nouvelle Cite" - C.P. 636 - St. Jerome -
Canada - J7Z 5T9

TO ISTANBUL FOR UNITY: In June of his year Chiara Lubich visited the Seat of he Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople or an important ecumenical encounter.



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ANISH:
"Ciudad Nueva"- Av. de Rivadavia 4939 - enos Aires 24 - Argentina
"Ciudad Nueva"- Ferrer del Rio, 1 Esc A, 2° 5ª drid - Spain

RTUGHESE "Cidade Nova" CX.POSTAL 30 730 Vargem Grande Pta. Sao Paolo - Brazil

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" - 70 Waterloo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" - St. Stephanusstrasse 11 - Nijmegen - Holland

GERMAN: "Neue Stadt" - Gleissnerstrasse 87 8000 Munchen 83 - Germany

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:

1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3 England
2. "New City" - P.O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
3. "New City" - 367 Balwyn Rd - Balwyn North 3104 - Australia

SPECIAL

No other event could have brightened the summer of the Focolarini more than the visit of Pope John Paul II to the Mariapolis Center of the Focolare Movement in Rocca di Papa, near Rome, Italy. "Grow and multiply" was his parting wish to all those who had gathered there to express their unity and share in that unforgettable day.

An evening we will never forget

by Guglielmo Boselli

AN EVENING WE WILL NEVER FORGET

Pope John Paul II arrived at the Mariapolis Center of the Focolare Movement at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday August 19. There to greet him were Chiara Lubich, founder of the Movement and Bishop Liverzani, the bishop of Frascati (photo left).

"I want to thank you for this extraordinary encounter," said Pope John Paul II speaking extemporaneously. He hadn't prepared any written address for he didn't want this visit to have any "official" flavor. It was simply an occasion to spend some time in a family atmosphere.

He had announced his intention to visit the International Center of the Focolare Movement at Rocca di Papa on August 15, Feast of the Assumption, allowing just enough time to notify the directors, members and friends of the Movement who, at the time, were scattered all over: some on vacation, others involved in the different "schools" of formation taking place, and others engaged in various activities.

When, however, on Sunday, August 19 at 6 p.m., the black limousine pulled into the driveway of the Mariapolis Center, there were 3,000 people waiting for him. They were standing in an orderly manner behind improvised fences but the obvious enthusiastic affection was bursting forth from every part.

Accompanied by Chiara Lubich and some of the directors of the Movement, the Pope walked the length of the driveway between two wings of cheering people. He paused to kiss and bless a few children, exchange a few words with some of the families and with whomever happened to be near. There were many young people from the Gen[1] school and "volunteers"[2] attending their school of formation nearby. There were sisters who had come to participate in an international convention, and groups of members and friends of the Movement from all over Italy and other European countries. There were the directors of the Movement in different countries, and men and women focolarini from the international mini-cities of Loppiano in Italy and Montet in Switzerland; there were Priests and men religious—all mingled in one big, festive crowd. Chiara Lubich later described everyone's feelings when together with the members of the Coordinating Council, she outlined for the Pope the spirituality, structure and spreading of the Movement in the world. "Your visit," Chiara began, "is for us a great gift of Mary to this Movement which is hers. We have immediately notified the members of the Movement all over the world, and never has there been greater jubilation. The fact is, Holy Father, that without any merit on our part, the Holy Spirit has poured so much love for the Church into our hearts, that nothing in the world matters more to us than that which concerns the Pope. If then the Holy Father expresses his fatherly love for some of us or for some of our groups, we feel fully rewarded for whatever we have been able to do for the

A meeting with the directors of the Movement in one of the rooms of the Mariapolis Center. Chiara Lubich gave a presentation of the spirituality and the structure of the Movement.

Church. You can imagine what it meant to us to hear that you intended to come and visit us. Nothing could have been more desirable. The entire Movement, in all the five continents, is spiritually present here today." It was in one of the meeting rooms of the Mariapolis Center that Chiara and the members of the Movement's Central Coordinating Council, provided the Pope with a detailed in-depth description of the Movement which by now has reached 153 nations and numbers over a million people.

It is a Movement which through its twenty-six different branches, its movements within the Movement, its apostolic, spiritual, social, cultural and editorial activities, its work in the field of ecumenism, of dialogue with the faithful of other religions, with people of different ideologies, and with nonbelievers, reaches out to the world in a variety of ways and directions. It is a complex movement, an expression of a "way of living Christianity" which, as Chiara Lubich put it, "hinges on two principle points: unity, as invoked by Jesus in his priestly prayer, and Jesus crucified and forsaken, the key to unity between the human person and God, all persons with one another." It is a "spirituality of unity" in which we "go to God through our neighbor, or rather *with* our neighbors. It is, therefore, a collective spirituality."

For obvious reasons the presentations were brief but in spite of this, the Pope's presence made each aspect and the very charism of the Movement itself stand out in all its significance, as attested by the Pope's comments, his interest, his vigorous encouragement.

After this presentation everyone moved outside to the lawn in front of the Mariapolis Center which had been hastily transformed into an outdoor theater with chairs and a stage so that the Pope could enjoy a moment of entertainment with the songs and dances of the musical groups Gen Verde and Gen Rosso, and also listen to some experiences of life of the young people present. The Pope had already heard some experiences given by families during the Family Fest at Rome's Sports Stadium,[3] and those of priests and religious given during another meeting in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall (when, in an unforgettable moment, 7,000 priests concelebrated with John Paul II).[4] He had also heard the testimony of people involved in the New Humanity Movement which held its convention last year, and which aims to bring the Gospel into all aspects of human endeavor.[5]

This time, three Gen were being given the opportunity to tell the Pope how the message of the Gospel had radically changed their lives.

At the end of the visit, the Pope referred back to those very experiences and summed up his impres-

sion of the hours spent together. We are publishing here his entire talk. It is extremely important, not only for those who belong to this Movement in the Church, but for all, because of its powerful and universal message. It is a talk centered on the "radicalism of love," which he had found in Chiara and in the focolarini, and which he compared to other expressions of radical love in the history of the Church—that of St. Francis of Assisi, of St. Ignatius of Loyola, of Charles de Foucauld. It was a radicalism which, he reminded those present, gave meaning and substance to the "self definition" which the Second Vatican Council gave to the Church of today.

The fatherly trust that John Paul II showed towards those engaged in spreading the "charism proper to your Movement" was further underlined by his parting words as he gave his blessing together with the two bishops present; "I leave you with the same words God addressed to our first ancestors,'Grow and multiply'."

It was already close to nine o'clock when, on the evening of that splendid summer's day, Pope John Paul II returned to his car for the trip back to nearby Castelgandolfo. He left in everyone an immense joy, the joy of having lived three hours with the Pope in an atmosphere of love and faith, and of having received from him the most valid confirmation and encouragement to continue with ever greater commitment along the road undertaken. This was no superficial enthusiasm, but rather a deep awareness of what this encouragement, given by the successor of Peter in today's Church, for today's humanity, meant. □

"Your radicalism of love"

On the lawn of the Mariapolis Center, Pope John Paul II addressed the crowd of focolarini who had come from all parts of Italy and Europe to be present for his visit.

I thank you for this extraordinary encounter. It was, I would say, something extraordinary to come here from Castelgandolfo. Because, I thought, the focolarini are not coming to Castelgandolfo, I will go! I thank you therefore for this meeting which was extraordinary also for its content. First of all, I have been able to visit your Center, the Mariapolis, which embraces all the Focolare Centers of the world. I was able to speak with Chiara and with those who work closely with her at the Center, and see briefly how the Movement lives and develops, how it fulfills its mission, its apostolate all over the world. After this conversation, I participated in the second part of this encounter during which three very moving experiences of life—deeply moving indeed—have been shared, bringing us to the very core, the very heart of what the Focolare Movement is. Through art a witness was given to the fact that the very love which lives within your Movement is capable of animating all human values; the value of beauty, of art. These values are

forever destined to expresss that which is deepest in man, that which is most spiritual, human and also divine, because man is made in the likeness of God. As the encounter was proceeding, I reflected a lot. I will now try to summarize everything with a concluding remark and a wish. The concluding remark touches on the point which is central to your Movement: love. Love is certainly at the basis of many movements, structures, of all apostolic endeavors. It is at the basis of all religious families. Love is rich; it brings within itself great potential, it pours into human hearts the different charisms. During this encounter, I was able to come a little closer to that which is the charism proper to your Movement. In other words, I was able to better understand how love—a gift of the Holy Spirit and the expression of the human spirit, its greatest virtue—constitutes your charism and is that which characterizes your Movement. It is good that you have found this way, this vocation to love.

As I listened to the testimonies that have been shared, I became even more convinced of something that I have been realizing for many years and every day: in today's world, in the life of nations, of society and its different sectors, of people, hatred, conflicts are very strong, they are part of the program of action. Then we need love, we need a program of love. One could say that love needs no program, yet love can create also beautiful, very beautiful and very rich programs such as yours. We need the presence of love in the world in order to counteract the great danger which threatens humanity, which threatens the human person. I mean the danger of a life without love, where hatred, conflict, different kinds of warfare, different kinds oppressions, different kinds of tortures (as we have heard) are present. Love is stronger than everything and this is your faith. This is the source of inspiration for all that is done under the name Focolare, of all that you do in the world. Love is stronger. Love is a revolution. A revolution of love is needed in this world which is so tormented by revolutions based on hatred and conflict. The revolution of love must prove to be stronger. This is also the radicalism of love.

"YOU BEAR WITNESS TO GOD, WHO IS LOVE, WITH THIS RADICALISM OF LOVE, WITH THIS CERTAINTY THAT LOVE MUST ALWAYS BE STRONGER, IN EVERY SITUATION, EVERY DIFFICULTY."

In the history of the Church, there have been many radicalisms of love, almost all contained in the supreme radicalism of Jesus Christ. There has been the radicalism of St. Francis, of St. Ignatius of Loyola, of Charles de Foucauld and many others up to our day. There is also your radicalism of love, of Chiara, of the Focolarini: a radicalism of love which discovers the depth of love and its simplicity, all the demands of love in the different situations. It is a radicalism of love that labors to see love win always, whatever the situation, whatever the difficulty that doesn't allow that the human spirit, people, who humanly speaking could succumb to hatred, to be overcome by it. Rather it sees that love wins always.

This is the evangelical radicalism of love which you try to bring into the life of the men and women of today, into every sector of society, in the whole world. You bear witness to God, who is Love with this radicalism of love, with this certainty that love must always be stronger in every situation, before every difficulty. We can say that your work of evangelization starts from love. It starts from love to reach God. Many times, one could start from God, to arrive, perhaps, to love. You have highlighted this wonderful formula of St. John: "God is Love." This means that when one lives love, when love achieves its purpose, when one sees that love wins in every circumstance, then one shows God. This is not only an abstract program, it is a program of life. It is good that you give so much importance to experiences of life, because each one of them carries within itself the confirmation of this program. It is good that the program be written more in experiences of life than on paper or in theory.

I have been thinking of all of this during my visit to your International Center. I thank you for the opportunity you have

given me to live all this, to reflect upon it, to see that which forms your life, the life of your great Movement numbering over a million people all over the world, that which is at the basis of the experience of each one of you: the revelation of love,that God is love.

You have found also in this a personal solution. We noticed this strongly in the experiences that were shared. There is a personal solution. Without this awareness and experience, without this grace, there is an emptiness. In fact, another threat, besides that of conflict, warfare and hatred, of different wars, of nuclear self destruction, there is the danger of this emptiness in the human heart. You want to remedy directly this danger with your personal experience; an experience of life, which can then be shared with others.

This is how much or part of what I have been reflecting upon during today's encounter, this blessed encounter. I wish, therefore, that you continue along the same path. Your direction is very clear, your charcteristic is clear cut. You have a charism in that richness of love which has its source in God himself, in the Holy Spirit. You have already found your field of action, your own dwelling. I wish that you may always remain within and develop more this reality, proper to your vocation, and that you may bring to today's world which is so much in need of it—love—and through love, God. This is my wish for you.

I entrust you in a very special way to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church, our Mother, the mother of the apostles, of every Mariapolis in

(continued on page 10)

The youth speak: three experiences of life

Sylvia Tarchi is from Florence. Her experience was one of the three presented to the Pope during his visit.

"I was brought up in a family of atheists—she said—where I was taught human values and definite ideological principles. Religion was never mentioned except to criticize the Church. I always felt a very strong sense of justice and I looked around me for an answer to my many questions." She saw only one road ahead for the building of a new world: to fight for it. At fifteen this was the road she chose, together with her father, fully committing herself to it, participating in rallies, assemblies, debates with students and working people. Then, after a few years, a crisis arose. "In spite of the fact that I hardly had a minute for myself," she continued, "I felt a terrible emptiness inside, a constant longing for something more."

It was at that moment that she met the Gen. "In that authentic, new love which I found among them, I immediately saw the seed of the new world I had long been seeking and dreaming of. Here I saw unity among human beings become a reality. It was not an idea of class equality, it was not a theory—it was life." It was the discovery of the Gospel, of the transforming presence of Christ among those united in his name; it completely overturned her way of looking at the world and at humanity.

"Now," she concluded, "I would like to have a thousand lives, and live them all in this way. It not only gives meaning to my own life, or to our lives, but it is the answer to all the problems of today's humanity."

Riccardo Bosi, on the other hand, had a Christian background, both in his family and social life. The environment he lived in was "full of social and cultural demands and stimulation," he said. He, too, had always longed to reach out to humanity, to every human being who suffers and who hopes for a better society. He joined many very active political groups "but soon the original evangelical roots that had sustained us were weakened; and since we were no longer animated by that spirit, our activities became meaningless," he continued.

"With the Gen, I discovered a new chance of becoming involved again," he said. He felt as though Jesus was saying to him personally, "Come and follow me." After graduating, he went to work in the fields, to help handicapped children, drug addicts, earthquake victims, jail inmates—always sustained by one thought: "Jesus is truly present in every neighbor. I will find him in those who suffer the most, those in the deepest despair, in the outcast. Every time I meet someone who suffers, it is an encounter with pain; but now pain and suffer-

ing have a meaning, a countenance—for me, that of the suffering Christ who has filled every emptiness and who was the first to pass through that dark tunnel, filling it with the light of his resurrection. When I try to go through that tunnel with these suffering neighbors, joy is born anew within me, too, and the light returns."

He recounted a particular episode of being in a penitentiary, where he substituted another physician for a month. "Every day I was in touch with people whose names and faces appeared often in the news. I talked to them in their cells, in the infirmary, together we rediscovered the meaning of life, the meaning of their suffering was." What remained most in his heart from that experience was, as he put it: "that the possibility is always there for me to share in the life experience of every human being. I am sure, now, that I can take part in the adventure of today's men and women, in their often desperate search for the meaning of life."

The third, very strong experience was that of a girl from South America. While her country was under dictatorship, she was arrested, interrogated and tortured, but her faith gave her the strength to go on and love. "All seemed absurd to me," she recounted, "but then I thought, 'even more absurd than this was a God who allowed himself to be crucified'."

The Pope listened attentively as three Gen presented their experiences.

She shared, "When the electric shocks which were being applied to my whole body reached my head, what I feared most was not to be able to consciously love God anymore, but I was aware of a certain strength within me. Perhaps it was from the Eucharist I had received a few hours earlier that evening." Faced with the despair and the hatred of those who had tortured her, she felt no resentment, only compassion. "They realized that I was a Christian. I asked them, 'How can you live like this?' and their leader answered 'I was a Christian like you, but this is a war'."

Gathering all her strength, the girl answered: "It is not true, a person can always start again. God is always forgiving. There is another way of living, I assure you." Then, unexpectedly they set us free. "A fullness I had never experienced before made everything radiant with light—she concluded—God had been close to me, beyond the pain, sustaining me with his strength, his love, his great joy. I gave Him thanks."

(continued from page 8)
the world. I entrust you to her, because more than all people on earth, she knew how to live love, that radicalism of love in the simplest, most marvelous, absolutely original, Marian way. You are fascinated by the Virgin Mary, by her sanctity, by the love living in her heart. You want to imitate Mary. I wish that you attain this always more. Furthermore, I wish that through Mary, you may come clsoer to Jesus who has shown us that God is love, closer to the Holy Spirit, who has poured love in our heart, thanks to the redepmtion, the cross and resurrection of Jesus. Once more, I want to extend these wishes to all the Focolarini throughout the world because you are very united to one another and try to form a great Christian, evangelical, *focolarina* family, in the whole world. I place my confidence in this family. I want to thank you for your apostolate because I am here as the successor of Peter, concerned about the apostolatè of the Church. I'm

When the meeting inside the Mariapolis Center finished a moment of relaxation followed. The Mariapolis Center was built in the sixties, Chiara Lubich explained to the Pope, and is now fulfilling an important function, that of housing the various courses of formation for leaders and members of the Focolare Movement. Today its size is no longer adequate for the needs of the Movement and it will therefore become an office building for the Movement's headquarters. The changeover is expected to take place as soon as the work on the new Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo (the large Audience Hall which the Pope has placed at the Movement's disposal and which Chiara mentioned with gratitude in her address to him) is completed. LEFT: The Gen Verde musical group performed a few excerpts from their rock opera "One World, One Home." ABOVE: At 9:00 p.m. the Pope returned to his car for the trip back to Castelgandolfo. He left in everyone the immense joy of having lived three hours in an atmosphere of love and faith.

convinced, indeed I see, I experience which aspect of the Church is proper to you. I wish you be a leaven in the mass of mankind, and of the people of God. I wish that you may be an evangelical leaven in the Church which has recognized its dimension with Vatican II in the constitution *Lumen Gentium* and in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. I see that you intend to authentically adhere to that vision of the Church, that definition that the Church has given of itself in the Vatican Council. In this light, I see your very fruitful contacts in the ecumenical dimension, and also with our non Christian brothers who possess their religious riches. I could see it, for example, also during my brief visit to Korea and Thailand. This is true also of your contacts with our secularized world, with the nonbelievers, with the atheists and the agnostics. The Church is everywhere. St. John of the Cross used to say: "Where there is no love, bring love, and you will find love."I think that this can be very well applied to your apostolate in every environment, not only in the Church in its Catholic entity, but also in its ecumenical dimension and in that of dialogue with the non Christian, with the nonbelievers, everywhere. Love opens the way. I hope that, thanks to you, this way may be always more open for the Church. ●

1) and 2) See inside back cover; 3) See Living City Vol. 20 N.7; 4) See Living City Vol. 21 N.8/9; 5) See Living City Vol. 22 N.8/9.

A whole new world

by Sharry Silvi

Mariapolis is always Mariapolis —North or South, East or West. As the words of the song go ... everything sings when you are among us, it is Paradise here on earth...

This year, however, the Mariapolis had a variation. Not on the basic reality of unity which gives meaning and splendor to it, but on the structure of it, at least of one of the gatherings.

In Mansfield, Pennsylvania, this summer, the first Vacation Mariapolis took place.

When four of the "regular" ones had already taken place and the fifth was under way in Quebec, people began to arrive with fishing rods and hiking boots, and some even with their bikes, at Mansfield with its green slopes, parks and lakes.

It was impossible not to think of the early times of the Movement, of the first Mariapolises which took place in the Dolomite Mountains, in the North of Italy.

They were a time to be together and practice the mutual love of Jesus while one spent his or her vacation with other people.

In fact this North American Vacation Mariapolis wished to be an effort to do just that. And it was successful. It went from August 4 to August 12, and we enjoyed it immensely.

After a day spent playing sports or attending the minicourses offered (and they covered a variety of subjects from Italian I and II, to introduction to Judaism, Science, and so on) or going on different excursions.

The Mariapolis gathered together to reflect on the love of God, on the presence of Jesus in the midst of those who love one another, on the mystery of his and our suffering, on Mary the Mother of all.

At the moment of Eucharist celebrated every night, many thanked God for a day filled with a deep joy, the joy that inevitably comes when we try to love forgetting ourselves. That was after all what it was

all about. And an explosion of joy was the Fest at the end where we laughed at our own "old man" portrayed very well in the common story of a regular family arriving at the Mariapolis.

That night there were certificates for those who attended the mini-courses, and ribbons for those who caught the most fish or played the best as a team, and so on.

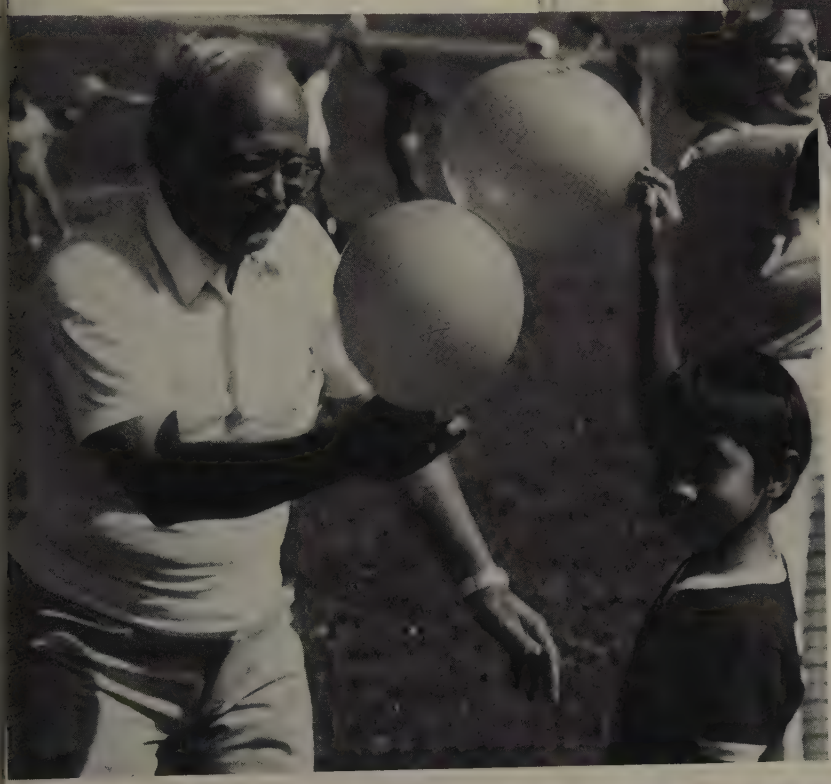
Before you knew it, it was time to go, but no one left as he came—the experience of unity is something unforgettable and you feel like sharing it with everyone. You know it is possible everywhere.

Yet we left with a certain nostalgia and a longing to be together again, to experience once more that "Paradise on earth" which unity is.

Now we are at work to bring it about in our corner of the world until Mariapolis will be here again, fuller and deeper for us if we have worked at building it in the world. •

OPPOSITE PAGE: Games at the East Coast Mariapolis held in Mansfield, Pennsylvania. ABOVE: Two scenes from the Carribbean Mariapolis held in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. LEFT: singing; RIGHT: Jose Hernandez sharing an experience of loving his companions at school. BELOW: Some Gen 3 boys at the East Coast Mariapolis.

FACES OF THE MARIAPOLIS



Scenes from the first North American Vacation Mariapolis

Make your plans now to join us next year for the 1985 Vacation Mariapolis to be held at Alfred University, Alfred, New York from August 9 to August 17.

by Gabriella Fallacara

To Istanbul for unity

On June 8, Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, made a visit to Istanbul, where she was received by an Orthodox delegation of the Phanar (Seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate). She had come in response to an invitation by Dimitrios I, Archbishop of Constantinople, who received her for a private meeting on June 9. That same day, the Feast of the Pentecost, she attended the Divine Liturgy in St. George's Church in the Phanar. During the days that followed, Chiara also met to discuss matters of an ecumenical nature with the Armenian Patriarch, Snork Kalustyan, and, on another occasion with three local Catholic bishops. On the following pages we are publishing an overview of the events of this visit as well as an interview she gave to Vatican Radio while still in Istanbul.

In July 1983, Patriarch Dimitrios I, speaking to a group of the Focolare Movement who were visiting the Phanar, said among other things, "During these days you have spoken about unity and about that united world for which all of us are yearning and praying. This theme of yours is the most needed and the most important one we are confronted with today. Heads of nations and of churches are getting together to discuss, talk and work for unity; but this unity will never be a reality unless we first lay down the foundations which can make it possible: love, brotherhood, simplicity, a family-like atmosphere—that is, everything that the Focolare Movement personifies and which you have certainly lived during these days.

"These are the virtues and the teachings of the early times of our Church. We wish to recall them and go back to them in order to reach more easily the unity we are seeking."

The Patriarch then added, "We still remember the visit of Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Movement, and hope she will return again."

During the private audience on June 9, Chiara Lubich gave the Patriarch, as he had requested, a full,updated picture of the life that had sprung from the spirituality of the Movement. Dimitrios I, as his predecessor Athenagoras had done, has been following with great love and interest the development of the Focolare Movement in the Orthodox world. In fact, it now counts

ABOVE:June 9. During a visit to the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I, the guests are leafing through a photo album showing the most significant events in the life of the Focolare Movement since Chiara's last visit in 1977. To the Patriarch's right are: Metropolite Bartolomeos, Secretary of the Holy Synod; Eli Folonari, and Chiara Lubich.

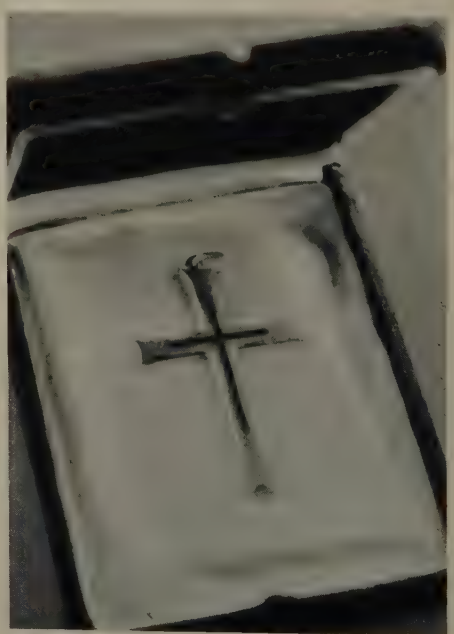
over a thousand adherents in various churches and patriarchates in twenty-seven countries.

To help illustrate the new developments, Chiara had brought with her a large album of photographs illustrating the more important events. After seeing it, the Patriarch said in a solemn and warm tone, "Before all else, we wish to express our joy at seeing you again after seven years, and also our great satisfaction with all that has been accomplished. This activity of yours reminds me of the Lord's words: 'Go and teach all nations'."

"Women need not be priests in order to convey Christ's message. They have another mission in the world." He continued, "You, Chiara, have created the solid foundations for a spiritual movement. We see that at times the ideals of Christian faith and of the Church are not fully realized; they are not the norm of behavior everywhere. The Focolare Movement, however, by transforming theory into practice and transmitting with ideals also life, has not only proved to be of great service to the spirituality of the people of God, but to Church unity as well. We are convinced," he went on, "that as it spreads throughout the world the Movement will bring a great contribution towards the realization of Christ's evangelical message."

The Patriarch invited Chiara Lubich to come back soon because, as he said, "Each encounter creates a very rich spiritual atmosphere."

The rapport of unity can also be expressed in gestures of friendship and esteem: the Patriarch presented Chiara with "the Byzantine Cross" as a sign of unity. It is a precious gift which, according to the tradition of Constantinople, is



At the end of her visit, Patriarch Dimitrios I presented Chiara with the Byzantine Cross. It is a gift reserved for special occasions.

To Vatican Radio, who called from Rome the very day of her meeting with Patriarch Dimitrios I, Chiara Lubich had this to say about her impressions: "Today I went to the Phanar, which is the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and met the Patriarch who had invited me to come. I told him about all that had happened in the Focolare Movement in recent years, about our activities within the Catholic Church and also about our relationship with the other Christian churches, our contacts with the faithful of other religions, and with nonbelievers.

I also informed him about the encounters that take place every year among Catholic bishops who are friends of the Movement, and, for the last two years, also among bishops of different churches. The meetings of the Catholic bishops are held in Rome, in South America (Brazil and Argentina) and in Asia; those of the various churches are held in Rome.

The Patriarch expressed his great satisfaction, and said that he shared the deep trust and esteem the Holy Father John Paul II has for the Movement. He also assured us that he had followed closely the jubilee of Redemption, and celebrated it with us, with the Catholic Church. He had beautiful words about the Holy Father, praising above all his activity and his courage.

Question: What are the concrete perspectives for a closer communion between the Church of Rome and the one of Constantinople, and with the Orthodox world in general?

June 8: In a long-distance call from Rome, Chiara Lubich answered some questions for Vatican Radio.

My impression, in talking with the Patriarch, is that he has an extraordinary longing for unity. This is always a rediscovery. This morning, for instance, he told me that, to him, "the division of the Church is a great misfortune, whereas a united Church could serve humanity perfectly."

I can add something about our Movement and its impact on the unity of the two Churches. This morning the Patriarch told me again how much he wished for an ever-deeper cooperation at various levels—for instance among the young people of both Churches, but also among the Orthodox metropolites and Catholic bishops. A meeting of Catholic bishops and Orthodox bishops and metropolites had, in fact, been planned for October 1985, but the Patriarch wanted to move it ahead to 1984. This shows you how much interest there is. As I see it, there is a great, great deal to hope for.

given only on special occasions. Sharing in the joy of this encounter were Metropolite Bartolomeos of Philadelphia, Secretary of the Sacred Synod; Eli Folonari, Chiara's secretary; Aletta Salizzoni and Guido Brini, Gabriella Fallacara of "Centro Uno,"[1] and Father Angelo Beghetto.

The following day, a delegation from the Catholic Church led by Cardinal Godfried Daneels of Brussels, and Chiara Lubich with a group of men and women of the Focolare Movement were the guests of honor at the Divine Liturgy of Pentecost in St. George's Church at the Phanar where the prayers reflected the deep love of the Holy Spirit who "calls all to unity," as the Patriarch said.

Everything appeared as an invitation to go ahead with new interest, "and work toward the realization of the long and difficult, but not impossible ideal of Christ's prayer for unity," Chiara herself will write later. "We are aware and comforted by the thought that if there is no one to sow, there will be no one to harvest."

Another important ecumenical event took place at Kumkapi, seat of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch, with His Beatitude Snork Kalustyan, a friend of the late Athenagoras I. He also knew Pope Paul VI and now Pope John Paul II. He had expressed the wish to meet Chiara Lubich after reading some of her writings and also a biography compiled by the Baptist pastor Edwin Robertson.

On the day after Pentecost the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch Snork Kalustyan received Chiara Lubich at Kumkapi, seat of the Patriarchate. The Armenians of Istanbul, numbering about forty thousand, represent the largest Christian community.

He spoke with enthusiasm about the present rebirth of the Armenian Church which spread all over the world after the wars of this century. "The Armenian Church is not cold and aloof from humanity," said Kalustyan, who also emphasized his great desire for Church unity and his willingness to help build it. "I would say," he continued, "that the differences between the churches are small, not many. We are the ones who make them big. It is not doctrine, but politics and bureaucracy that create the big obstacles. In the ancient churches, for instance, like the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox, the Armenian, the Coptic and the Syrian Churches, we have the same Gospel, we believe in the Holy Trinity, we have the same sacraments, we all believe in the apostolic succession." He further specified, "We do not see any appreciable differences between the statements of the Council of Calcedonia and the teachings of St. Nerses Legracieux, the great Patriarch of the Armenian Church—all the differences lie in the words, in the terminology."

A meaningful moment was the visit to the tomb of Patriarch Athenagoras I. There Chiara and her friends prayed that the Patriarch, together with Pope Paul VI, may protect and bless every effort and every progress toward full unity. Oftentimes during these days the words of the late Athenagoras I came to mind. He had loved the Movement so much to call himself a "focolarino." "The day will come"—he had said—"when the sun will rise high, angels will sing and dance" for joy because of the "one chalice."

Before departing, Chiara wrote to Patriarch Dimitrios I, "We cannot let any time go by without thanking you from the bottom of our heart for your fatherly welcome, for your words which filled our soul with great joy, and for your gifts. We have been very happy here." And she expressed her hope, "We trust Mary (since we are called the 'Work of Mary') will see to it that the presence of Jesus" among those united in his name "contributes, through the spirituality of unity, towards bringing the moment closer when the Churches will be one." ●

1) "Centro Uno" (Center for Unity) is the ecumenical office in Rome of the Focolare Movement.

ECONOMY and WORK their roots in the bible

by Mariele and Pino Quartana

We are continuing our coverage of the New Humanity Convention held on June 3 with a look at other presentations given that day.

In the previous issue of Living City we published an article on a convention held in Rome in June of this year. The theme of the convention was "Economy and Work" and it brought together 3,500 members of the New Humanity Movement who are active in the fields of economy and work. The purpose of the New Humanity Movement "is to incarnate in all expressions of human life the Focolare Movement's evangelical ideal... and we are here today because we believe that the charism of our Movement has something to offer also on the subject of these two aspects of our daily life." Chiara Lubich's opening talk, published in its entirety in the October issue of Living City, went on to describe the principles which the Movement has highlighted in the forty years of its existence. They explain the attitude which the members have towards the aspects of economy and work. "Practically speaking," she said, "we want to offer our contribution so that economy and work may be always more in unison with God's plan."

Fathers Lionello Bonfanti and Enzo Fondi were interviewed at the end of the morning session about economy and work as presented in the Old Testament and New Testament.

"Already in the first books of the Old Testament," said Father Bonfanti, "a Christian can in fact find valid answers that can be applied even today —I would say *particularly* today—to the life of the worker in a framework which not only embraces the person as a whole but society and history as well."

"Let us keep in mind," he continued, "that all the aspects of work which make up what today we call civilization, culture and technological knowledge, rest on a divine mandate expressed in Genesis: "Fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 2:28). Inasmuch as it is a task which God has entrusted to mankind, work implies a moral responsibility for all of humanity represented by Adam and Eve. The earth was to be subdued, not in an arbitrary and despotic manner, but as an extension of God's activity as Creator, and in conformity with his design on humanity and on the cosmos. This is the meaning of the initial blessing imparted on Adam and Eve and on their work."

"Genesis also tells us that Abel became a shepherd and Cain a tiller of the soil. They were engaged in the two principal forms of human work of that time. This means that the plurality of humanity, as represented by the two brothers, marks the beginning of the division of activities and of the variety of professions contained in the one duty imparted by God to all human creatures—the duty of work.

"The difficulties, therefore, of every era concerned with labor management—including the problems of unemployment, of on-the-job relations, of solidarity among workers and so on—have a meaning that is directly connected to God's own design on work. They have, in other words, a theological and moral importance even before having a political or juridical one. No one is allowed to overlook these problems: instead all are called to a commitment to find concrete solutions and see that at the basis of everything, an attitude of fraternity is assured, rather than denied as happened in the case of Cain and Abel."

On the subject of fatigue and suffering caused by work, "We must point out, first of all, that it is not work itself, but the 'sweat' and the afflictions that go with it, that resulted from our ancestors' sin. It is true, however, that, inasmuch as it is a basic component of human existence, there is the mark of sin on work itself, too—Cain killed Abel because he envied the fruit of his work.

"Yet, the original blessing still remains, and thus man's

conquests must be seen in a positive light—sp much so that, in the chapter describing humanity's development throughout a succession of generations, we read about the foundation of a city, and about the invention of various arts. These conquests are not the fruit of rebellion nor are they "stolen" crafts such as we might read about in the story of the mythological Prometheus who, according to legend, stole fire from the gods and brought it to humans. These conquests are the fruit of those capabilities, of that task, and of that blessing that God bestowed on humanity.

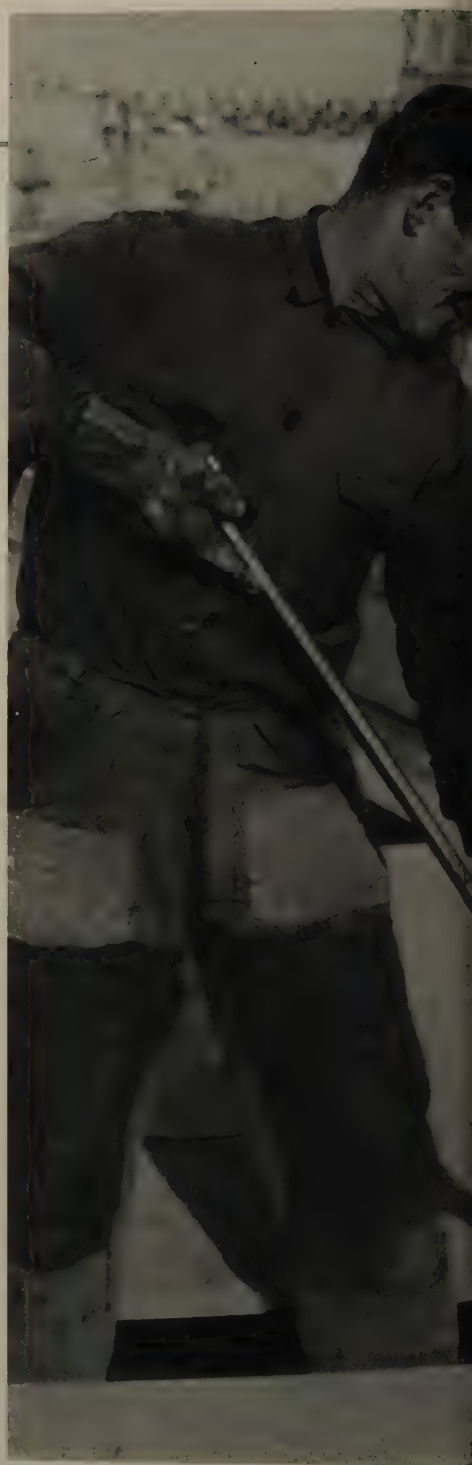
"But the inspired author of Genesis shows us clearly that such a conquest may also be misused, as in the case of Lamech. His God-given art of metal working and weapon fashioning made him swell with excessive self satisfaction and contempt for other peoples' lives. Scripture, in fact, records his horrible words: 'I have killed a man for wounding me, a boy for bruising me'." (Gen. 4:23)

The Old Testament is an excellent source of fundamental teaching not only about work, but also about economics. We need only point out the passage wherein, following the acts of injustice, violence and oppression which occurred after they settled in the land of Canaan, the chosen people were given the rules to be observed so as to assure justice and social cooperation. We learn of the sabbatical year in which debts were pardoned and slaves given their freedom, and of the prohibition on the collection of interest on loans—a system often used to accumulate fortunes and deprive the poor. Furthermore, there were rules imparted for the protection of wage earners and persons exposed to easy exploitation. These rules decreed, for example, that wages be paid at the evening of every working day, and there were regulations protecting the poor when pawning their belongings.

"Thus the books of the Old Testament clearly state that the earth belongs to God," concluded Fr. Bonfanti, "and that the Israelites were merely administrators of a land entrusted to them. They were also reminded of the religious foundation of the just and fraternal relationships to be maintained not only among themselves but with the foreigners residing in their territory as well."

It is of course from the New Testament that the Christian draws the most powerful spiritual and cultural nourishment, even in the fields of economy and work.

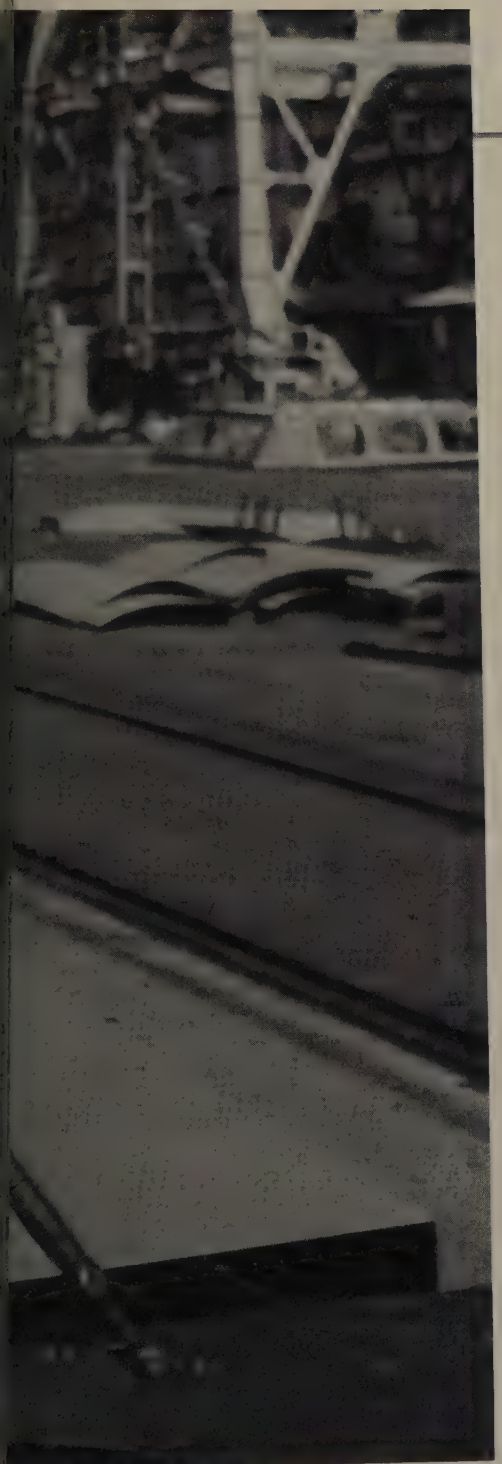
Fr. Enzo Fondi pointed out that the Word of God in becoming man, chose to be also a worker. Moreover, he did this in the context of the Greco-Roman world, where work was considered as something contemptible, left mostly to slaves. "The Son of God took upon himself our human condition. In the words of St. Paul, 'he took on the condition of a slave' (Phil. 2:7), which means someone forced to work with his hands. It is from this experience that Jesus drew the images, the terminology and background for his teachings, especially in the parables where he constantly referred to the work of the shepherd, the farmer, the physician, the sower, the



fisherman, the merchant, the laborer, the housewife.

"The entire Gospel—as Pope John Paul II has said—could be proclaimed a Gospel of work because he who proclaimed it was himself a working man."

The accusation so often aimed at Christians, that they look



down on or disregard the realities of life, is unfounded. "Let's take the problem of unemployment," Fr. Fondi continued. "It is not true that the Gospel invites us to a sort of fatalistic inactivity, escaping into faith and waiting for a solution from above. 'Seeking first the kingdom of God' means that we must first of all place our faith in God, but it also means that we must do everything in our power to solve the personal as well as the social problems of unemployment. It is love which requires this of us, love which is the basic law of the Gospel. This is what 'seeking the kingdom of God' means.

"I would say, therefore, that the Gospel gives us an added reason to act, a further incentive to work at improving our personal as well as the world situation. While it is asking us to put our trust in God who is all powerful, it also fills us with the zeal of charity and saves us from falling into a sense of frustration and hopelessness."

It is indeed the example of the early Christians that shows us in a unique and concrete way how to solve the economic problems that afflict society. They founded a community which had at its basis the communion of goods, a way of living which time and again has made the world wonder. This is a practice which the members of the New Humanity Movement (as in all the branches of the Focolare Movement) have adopted and wish to expand so that it may reach the greatest possible number of men and women everywhere.

Very often, however, in the world of work, it is not the "logic of the Gospel" which is most evident. Rather, the more negative aspects like unemployment, the dehumanization and exploitation of the worker, tend to overshadow the positive ones. What should our reaction be to these situations? "Also here," Fr. Fondi explained, "the Gospel offers a solution. 'In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body which is the Church' (Col. 1:24). In this sentence Paul is referring to all the suffering which he had to bear, including the hardship of manual labor. In work there is always the element of suffering and it can be put to good use spiritually. It is Christ who continues to work and suffer in his body and for his body. However, he gave us the key which enables us to transform even the hardship of work into something which is extremely positive.

"When the sense of job alienation reaches its culminating point, when the work situation is a constant scene of tension, even hatred, when human values are completely overlooked, the experience of Christ, who cried out in abandonment from the cross, is repeated. He teaches us that there is always room for an act of love. Even in the most difficult situations something great and beautiful can be born; and perhaps even more so there since often, just when the picture seems blackest, victory is at hand. It was, in fact, through dying on the cross that Jesus won over death.

This is valid not only in the spiritual sense but also in an ethical and social sense. Productivity and job creativity are directly related to one's ability to take on and share the difficult moments. The cosmos as well as an office or a factory can be transformed by the love of Christ if we are ready to live with him, to love as he loved, even to the point of abandonment." •

WORD OF LIFE

"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me." (Mt. 25:40)

"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

This sentence of Jesus is imbedded like a pearl in that well-known passage on the final judgment written by the evangelist St. Matthew. In a synthesis, it represents the whole message of the Gospel, reinforcing all that is affirmed in it regarding the human person and what is expected of him or her.

Jesus, the long-awaited "by all peoples," came and saved humanity fallen into sin. He himself bore the price of such an immense purification. He will return at the end of time under his rightful title as King and Judge and will gather together all peoples of every time and place in order to judge each individual according to his or her deeds. The result will be either eternal reward or eternal punishment.

However, according to the description of the final judgment that Jesus gave to his disciples, the divine judge will, at that time, say something very surprising: "I was hungry and you gave me food." When, though, did we ever give Jesus food? He goes on to explain:
"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

According to that description it would seem, therefore, that only at the moment of the final judgment we should find out that every person was a brother or sister to Christ and that therefore every act of love was either done or not done to him.

Jesus, however, in his infinite love for us did not keep this marvelous and tremendous truth hidden until the end of time. Moreover, to throw it into relief in all its value and importance, he revealed it to us here, in this passage, against the background of that event from which no one will be able to turn back.

"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

Who are the ones that Jesus calls the "the least of these brothers of mine?" The context in which he uses this expression is as we have seen, universal. It is a judgment to which all are called without distinction. This expression, therefore, does not refer only to Christians but to any human person, whether Christian or not, who is in a situation of need or difficulty. The passage refers to those who are hungry or thirsty, to those in need of clothing or housing, to the sick and the imprisoned, but we could easily extend it to include the millions who suffer and are in need and who call out for our help, even without words.

These are the ones whom Jesus calls his brothers and sisters and with whom he acknowledges a mysterious solidarity.

Already in the Old Testament God proclaimed himself to be, in a particular way, on the side of the poor, but it was never said that he identified himself with them. This came about with Jesus—the "God with us"; he himself would say:
"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

The fact that Jesus identifies in such a way with those in need is one of the highest and newest aspects of the Gospel message. When he became flesh, in fact, the Son of God "was rich, but he became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9).

He came not to be served but to serve. He cured the sick, relieved the suffering and associated with the outcasts of society, certainly not because of their moral or spiritual superiority, but out of love for them. He loved everyone without distinction but he reserved a special love for those who were most in need, even going so far as to offer himself up to death on the cross for all of us sinners in need of forgiveness. He was consistent in following this line of action also after his resurrection. He is, in fact, present in a special way in those who suffer and are in need. At the end of the world he will consider how we have treated the poor, the "least," those he regards as "his brothers," as the criteria for judging us.

Every act in favor or against every neighbor, therefore, is considered as having been done to Christ, and has eternal value.

"Insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me."

This sentence confirms once again that in Jesus' view nothing is more important than love. It is the essence of the Gospel's message.

It is so important that when we concretely help our neighbor, it is as if we were actually loving Jesus present in that person even if we do not realize it. We will therefore be able to enter with him into the Father's Kingdom. His Kingdom in fact will fill our hearts already here and now.

It is clear therefore how we can put this word of life into practice. Let us begin immediately by recognizing Jesus in whomever passes us by, without making a distinction between the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, those who are pleasant and those who are not so pleasant, the old and the young—treating each neighbor as we would actually treat Jesus.

Whatever our position may be in society let us not lose any opportunity to love, above all those who are most in need—the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the drug addicts, the unemployed, the outcasts of society—those we will become aware of day by day in our cities or in faraway countries. If we forget we can always begin again right away. We will never be without a neighbor to love.

Chiara Lubich

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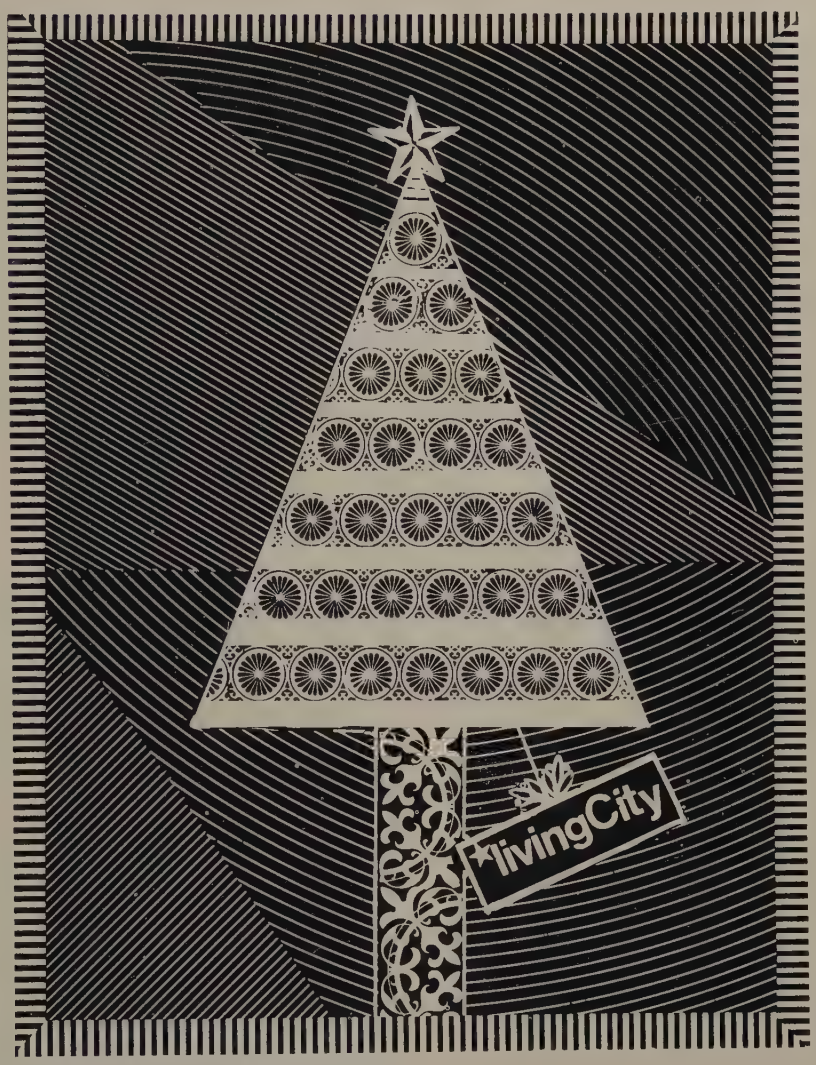

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EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences in living the Gospel which some of our readers have shared with us.

My mother's side of our family was fairly sizeable. There were seventeen cousins and as children we were very close. We lived for many years next door to my mother's sister's family in Houston while the other cousins lived in Dallas. My mother's brother and his family being from Dallas would make several trips a year to Houston. It was great fun when they would come and spend the weekend. My uncle has a daughter three years younger than I. As children we were very close. I had five brothers and she had four brothers, so our family assortment being so similar made it that much more fun when we all got together. The highlight of our summers were the weeks we stayed with each other either in Houston or Dallas. My brothers had a similar arrangement with her brothers.

When I was eighteen and my cousin was fifteen we had a very serious disagreement. This disagreement between the two of us caused our parents to take sides and also filtered to the other family of cousins. In less than one week the family was painfully split. My mother's brother from Dallas chose to completely cut his immediate family off from everyone. So for the past fifteen years the only communication that we have had with them has been through my grandmother who at eighty-five is still living. This family split has especially been painful for her. Not being involved herself she has silently lived fifteen years with never having the joy of her three children, seventeen grandchildren and now ten great grandchildren together in one place.

When my grandmother turned eighty we tried to have a family reunion which only resulted in more judgments and more grudges. All of us are adults now. All but five of the cousins are married. When our weddings came along there was a definite void because not all of our family members were present. We do not know each other's spouses, and in most cases each other's new last names. And another void was not being able to share the joy of the birth of our children.

This separation for me has been extremely painful. I can truthfully say that in all these years a day has not passed that the thought has not been present in my mind. I felt a big responsibility because the whole thing was triggered by a circumstance between my cousin and I.

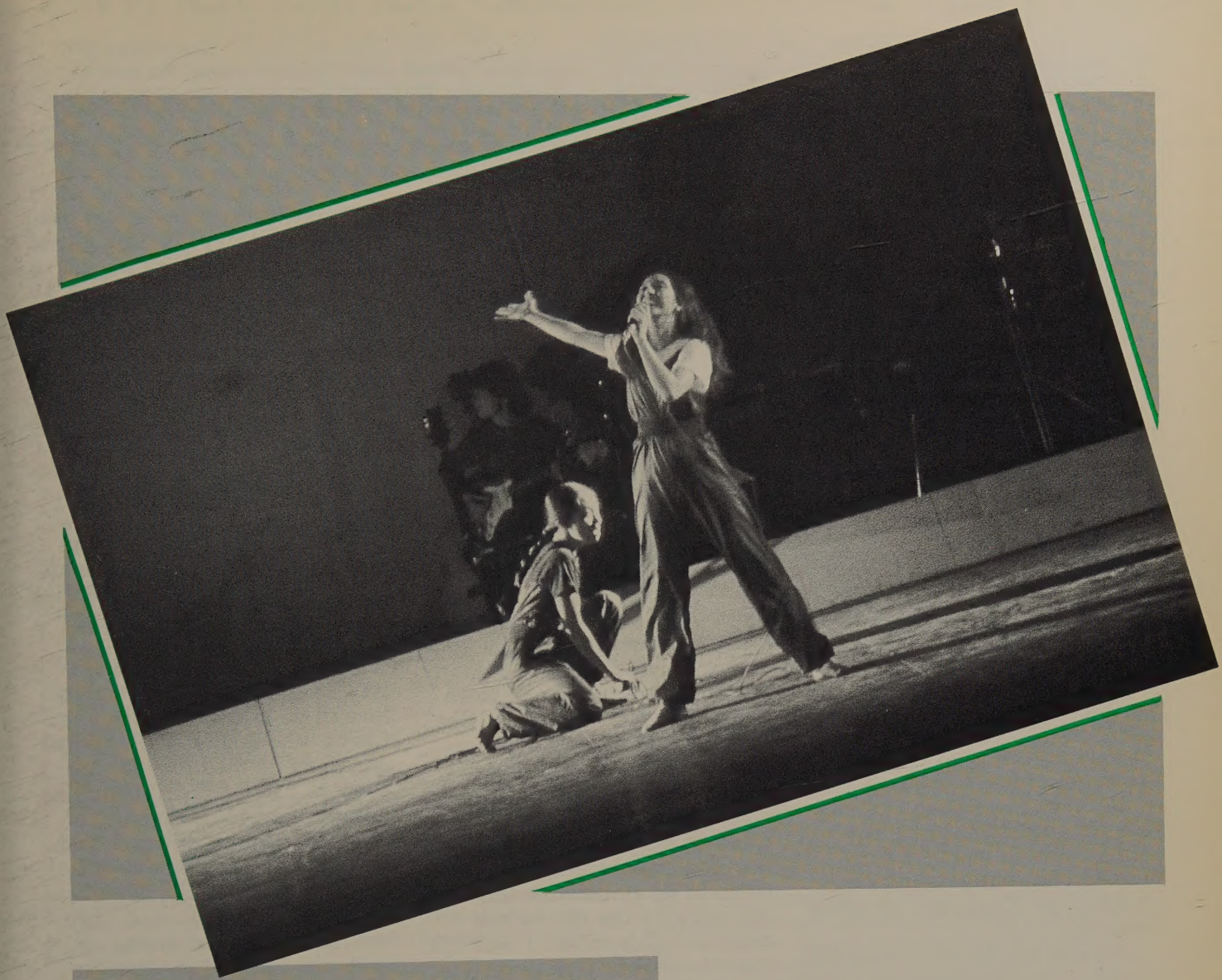
For me, time healed any hurt or any anger caused. It was even hard to recall exactly what took place. I moved to Dallas about six years after the breakoff. I used to think that living in the same town as my cousins I would surely run into one of them. When we would go to sport events, concerts, the circus or any place where there was a large crowd I would seriously look around to see if I could spot one of my cousins. Would I even recognize them if I saw them?

I went through a period in the last few years of wondering how the family could get back together. A couple of years ago one of my brothers went to see my aunt and uncle. This year one of my brothers went to one of the cousin's weddings. Still no dialogue started other than an exchange for an hour or so. At one point I even thought that at my grandmother's funeral, we would all be present and something would open then. It seemed impossible.

In the month of February the word of life was: "So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering" (Mt. 5:23).

My family situation came to me immediately in reading it. I let my human reasoning keep me from believing and acting upon God's words. I could not see how it would be possible after all these years. Also the

(Continued on page 28)



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(continued from page 26)

anger and separation was not just between my cousin and I, but involved twenty-two other people. I did nothing, but my soul was not at rest.

Finally I decided to go to my cousin. The decision was made, there was no changing it. It did not matter anymore who was responsible, who was right, who was wrong. What mattered was my love for God, which I could show by living the commandment of love of neighbor. The word of life was commanding reconciliation. I had forgiven but I felt that she had something against me.

The day came when we were to meet. My cousin had been very agreeable over the phone to meet for lunch the next day.

My friends sharing the same life of unity knew the exact time I was to meet with my cousin and were praying for both of us. That gave me great courage.

On the way to the restaurant, I was very frightened but I had a strength that I had never experienced before nor can I describe. I knew that if I did the will of God, he would be the one to guide me.

I promised him that I would remain completely empty and just love. I was ready with God's help to accept any rejection, any coldness, any anger. When my cousin and I first caught a glimpse of each other I knew that it was the love of God for us. There was already a happiness without words.

Right away I told her that I had asked her to meet me because I wanted to tell her that I was sorry. She told me that she had waited for this day for a very long time. It was as if this time that we had both waited so long for had finally arrived and had set us free. We had a beautiful hour together, with no mention of our particular disagreement. Instead we shared the pain we had both felt many times in not being able to share the last fifteen years together. It was a new beginning. At the end of our hour I told her I wanted to buy her lunch. She said only under the condition that when we went to lunch again she could buy mine. We left with an embrace and a promise to see each other soon.

At this point I felt that I also had to go to visit my aunt and uncle. This past September my grandmother was in town for my brother's wedding. She took sick while staying in my home. After we saw she was not getting any better with a week of being in bed we decided to put her in the hospital. My grandmother's request was to go in an ambulance and that my uncle be the one to ride with her. This meant I was the one who had to arrange everything. When my aunt and uncle arrived at my home to meet the ambulance. I experienced much coldness and anger still in them.

Remembering how I had been treated that day the thought of calling them to invite myself to their home was very painful. It seemed impossible that they would even let me in. It was an opportunity to say my yes with an even deep commitment to God's will and love Jesus Crucified and Forsaken in my suffering.

When the day finally came my uncle answered the door. As I entered the family room I noticed my aunt off to the side of the room folding clothes. She didn't look up.

I experienced rejection, loneliness, hurt, but again it was an opportunity for me to love in all of this the Crucified Christ who felt all of these feeling when he died for me. As soon as I embraced this suffering my aunt joined us and offered me a glass of tea. I told them that I had come to ask for their forgiveness. My uncle shared with me the pain they too had felt in not seeing us grow up. He told me that in the last fifteen years he never stopped loving me. We visited about an hour and I left. I cannot describe the peace and joy I experienced.

M.C.

We will be continuing our series
"The Early Christians"
in the next issue with:
"St. Basil–First witness . . . then speak".

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

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